(283)

UNITED
NATIONS

E

Economic and Social Council

Distr.
GENERAL

E/CN.4/Sub.2/1992/NGO/3
30 July 1992

Original: ENGLISH

COMMISSION ON HUMAN RIGHTS
Sub-Commission on Prevention of
Discrimination and Protection
of Minorities
Forty-fourth session
Item 8 of the provisional agenda

THE REALIZATION OF ECONOMIC, SOCIAL AND CULTURAL RIGHTS

Written statement submitted by the International Federation for the Protection of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic and other Minorities, a non-governmental organization on the Roster

The Secretary-General has received the following communication, which is circulated in accordance with Economic and Social Council resolution 1296 (XLIV).

[20 June 1992]

1. With a view to promoting international understanding of the issues addressed in resolution 1990/17 and 1991/28 of the Sub-Commission on Prevention of Discrimination and Protection of Minorities entitled "Human rights dimensions of population transfer, including the implantation of settlers and settlements", the first international conference on the subject, organized by the Unrepresented Nations and Peoples Organization, was held in Tallinn, Estonia, in January 1992. Participants included members of the United Nations Sub-Commission and the United Nations Centre for Human Rights, non-governmental organizations which actively take part in the work of the Sub-Commission, including this organization, and government representatives. In addition, more than 20 nations and peoples directly affected by this practice took part in this unprecedented meeting.

2. As the Sub-Commission has decided to consider effective action on the question of population transfer, taking into account relevant materials provided by, inter alia, non-governmental organizations, the remainder of this written submission will very briefly document an illustrative cross-section of population transfer cases, based on presentations made at the Tallinn Conference by the peoples directly affected. Most of these cases have received only limited or no attention by the international community.

3. The transfer of Russians into Abkhazia and the subsequent flow of Abkhazians to foreign countries have compromized the survival of the Abkhazian nation. The percentage of native Abkhazians in Abkhazia has decreased dramatically during the past decades.

4. Aboriginals have been removed from their traditional lands by the Australian Government for the sake of nuclear weapons testing and in favour of mining and pastoral interests. Contaminated sites have been given back to them and one in six Aboriginal children have been removed from their communities and families.

5. Millions of Javanese settlers have been transplanted into Acheh/Sumatra - reducing the indigenous population in some districts to a mere 20 per cent - with the aim of integrating all ethnic groups into one Indonesian nation. Plans exist to move many more millions of people to create the "Javanization" of non-Indonesian areas like East Timor, West Papua and the South Moluccas. Development projects supported by the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund have led to the dispossession of the original population.

6. The transmigration of Javanese by Indonesia to the South Moluccas is linked to the issue of deforestation which poses a threat to the water supply and affects agricultural cultivation. Licences for logging are given to non-South Moluccan companies and, despite protests, South Moluccans are not included when consideration is given to whom to award the licences.

7. The roots of population transfer in the area of West Papua is explained as stemming from the fact that Java is perceived to be overcrowded; therefore there is population transfer to the outer islands and a policy on family planning. But if the numbers of Papuans decrease sufficiently, the West Papuans will become extinct. Additionally, population transfer has been funded by projects financed by the World Bank. Tourism and its associated exploitation also form a problem.

8. Serbia pursues a population transfer policy against the Albanian population in Kosovo, aimed at re-populating Kosovo with Serbs. Normal life and the Albanian economy have been totally disrupted. Albanian schools have been closed down by the Serbs and Albanians removed from their jobs. Many ethnic Albanians have been forced to flee.

9. The Sovietization of the Caucasus has severely affected the Armenian population. Plans formulated in 1990 by the Azerbaijani authorities to deport the Armenians from Nagorno Karabagh and re-populate the territory with Azerbaijanis have contributed significantly to the deepening of the current ethnic conflict in Nagorno Karabagh.

10. After the mass displacement of Assyrians to Iraq during World War I, the Assyrian identity faces the threat of elimination by deliberate Iraqi population transfer policies such as forced displacements of hundreds of thousands of Assyrians. In addition, Assyrian schools and churches have been closed down and the rights to organize as an ethnic identity denied.

11. The transfer of Papuans into Bougainville poses a threat to the security of the whole North Pacific region. It was used as a means of subjugation and contributed to the uprising of the people on Bougainville against the Papua New Guinean Government. Under the freedom of movement clause in the Papua New Guinea Constitution, people from Papua New Guinea moved in, established villages and became the majority of labourers at the Panguna mine. Papua New Guineans ran the local government. After the withdrawal of Papua New Guinea forces from Bougainville in 1990, a blockade of the island has been maintained, leaving an estimated 16,000 dead as a result of lack of medical supplies and facilities.

12. Mass population transfer of Russians to Chechen-Ingush by the former Soviet Government has created acute problems for the Chechen people. In addition, the Soviet authorities employ force against the Chechen people and try to break the independence struggle by means of economic blockade.

13. Under Bangladesh Government policy, hundreds of thousands of Bengali settlers have been resettled in the Chittagong Hill Tracts, nearly outnumbering the original population. Additionally, 100,000 Jummas (the indigenous population) were displaced when the Kaptai Dam was built in 1960, which also submerged 40 per cent of the cultivable land in the region, and many fled to India. Jummas are forced into cluster villages which serve the purpose of clearing the land for future Bengali settlers and the purpose of monitoring and control over the activities of the Hill people.

14. The Crimean Tatars currently make up a mere 4-8 per cent of the population of the Crimea, most of them recent returnees. The Tatars were deported from the Crimea between 1941 and 1944 and allegedly 44 per cent of the population did not survive the deportation. Returnees face oppression and discrimination and many Tatars remain in the diaspora. The Russian immigrant population in the Crimea and the Russian Government have recently proposed holding a referendum on the future status of the Crimea. Tatars fear the foreseeable outcome of such a referendum under the present demographic circumstances may jeopardize the possibility of returning to the Crimea and may worsen their situation in the Crimea.

15. The indigenous people of Eastern Turkistan have become a minority in their own country as a consequence of Chinese population transfer policies. During the Cultural Revolution, Uyghurs from the Chinese-Soviet border regions were deported and Chinese nationals moved in. Recently the Chinese have announced plans to increase the population of East Turkistan, which contains 7.2 million Uyghurs, to 100 million by the year 2010 through the transfer of Chinese people. At the same time, birth control measures are imposed on the Uyghur people and displacement has occurred because of the nuclear testing at Lake Lob Nor.

16. In the case of Estonia, population transfer was achieved through the twin mechanisms of economic incentives and cultural exchange. Transfers occurred in two phases. Firstly, the transfer of Estonians to Siberia; the deportations started in 1941. Secondly, transfer of Russians to Estonia. Soviet factories attracted colonists and Soviet army personnel brought their families. Closed Russian societies were established. Conditions for colonists were better than for the local population. Currently, in independent Estonia constitutional initiatives are under way to find solutions for the problems stemming from population transfer.

17. Ethnic Greeks who constitute a minority in Albania have been "encouraged" to leave their ancestral lands and to relocate to the northern part of Albania in order to obtain education and decent employment opportunities, while Albanians settle on their lands. Food and medical aid donated to the Greek minority by the Greek Government to help alleviate the severe economic conditions has been administered and sold on the black market by Albanians, forcing more than 50,000 Greeks to flee the threat of famine.

18. Iraqi Turkmens suffer under population transfer policies imposed by the Iraqi regime. There have been expulsions and forcible transfers of Turkmens from their homes and villages, resettling them in remote areas in southern Iraq and in cities all over the country. Villages have been eradicated and thousands of Turkmens subjected to imprisonment and other forms of brutality.

19. In the case of the Kurds, Kurdish villages in strategic border areas have been de-populated in order to establish a buffer zone in which only Turkish security forces and secret service may operate and Kurdish villagers resettled in "defensive villages" for the purpose of combatting "terrorism" more effectively. Turkish laws legitimize the resettlement of the Kurdish population and in Iraq a programme of forced Arabization has been in place since 1963. Treatment of the Kurds by the Iraqi Government includes mass displacement, evacuation, destruction of villages, forced resettlement and murder.

20. Latvian independence is only partial because Soviet soldiers and Soviet citizens brought in during the occupation remain on Latvian soil. This poses the problem of how to treat such a "minority". The demographic balance of Latvia has been completely destroyed by the illegal implantation of settlers from the Soviet Union.

21. The Mari people face colonization through the transfer of Russians into their territory, forced removal of the indigenous population and loss of territory itself.

22. Chinese population transfer into Tibet - regarded as having a "backward" culture and economy - has been going on since the 1950s. From 1950 to 1980 the transfer was a centrally planned strategy, under which army, workers and administrators came to Tibet. Today, population transfer is centrally and locally induced by development, subsidies and incentives. Such incentives aggravate the discrepancy between the standard of living of the locals and the Chinese. The Chinese presence results in the disruption of Tibetan traditional economic and cultural patterns and has genocidal effects.

23. In the case of Zanzibar, an exodus of indigenous Zanzibari's to mainland Tanzania was encouraged through the systematic denial of employment possibilities and decent employment conditions or other forms of harassment, directed towards Zanzibari's. In this way, cheap manpower was supplied to Tanzania and Zanzibar became deprived of a large proportion of its education population, leading to an increased exodus and reduction of the Zanzibari indigenous population. Tanzanians were then settled in Zanzibar to fill up vacancies and run the island. Since discussions on a possible referendum on the future status of Zanzibar and the union with Tanzania began, transfer of indigenous Zanzibari's to the mainland and implantation of Tanzanian settlers has dramatically increased.

24. Situtations involving population transfers include immigration into indigenous areas which has resulted in the destruction of the environment and the denial of the right to self-determination of indigenous peoples. In Canada, only three out of twelve distinct linguistic groups have remained viable: the Cree, Dene and Inuit. The others are on the verge of extinction. Multinationals have been allowed access to indigenous lands to exploit the natural resources.

25. The above-mentioned examples demonstrate the scale to which population transfer is practised and the urgency of problems this practice is directly responsible for. The International Federation for the Protection of Ethnic, Religious, Linguistic and other Minorities welcomes the beginning the Sub-Commission has made to discuss the human rights impacts of this practice but wishes to stress that immediate and effective action with respect to this question is required by the different United Nations bodies. Failure to condemn this practice in the strongest terms and act accordingly will lead to increased threats to the international peace and security of regions and inevitable infringement of the human rights of original inhabitants, settlers and removed people alike.

26. Therefore, the Federation strongly encourages the Sub-Commission to officially appoint a rapporteur on the issue of population transfer. The mandate of the Rapporteur should be to investigate and make a compilation of population transfer cases worldwide and to study in detail the human rights and legal implications of the practice. Furthermore, the issue of population transfer should be placed firmly and securely on the agenda of the Sub-Commission.

- - - - -